

September 26, 1960

Dr. S. H. Hutner
Haskins Laboratories
305 E. 43rd Street
New York 17, New York

Dear Seymour:

I am rather anxiously looking for someone who can help me in the laboratory work for our exobiology program and I would be very grateful to you for any suggestions. While there will have to be industrial support for the actual design and construction of the instrumentation, there is a great deal of background work that we have to continue to do here. Ideally I would look for someone who was both an accomplished biophysicist with a specialty in optics and a microbiologist who had had considerable experience with the composition of soils from both a biological and a chemical standpoint. But I do not think it will be possible to find such a paragon and I would be content to find someone who was strong in any one of these respects. It is important, however, that whoever we get should know how to use a microscope and understand what he sees. For various reasons, this is getting to be more of a crash program than I would have liked and I am quite anxious to find someone who might be able to start on this fairly soon. We could offer a position as a research associate at a salary that should be quite competitive, taking into account the special demands of the pressure of time.

I would be especially interested if you can recommend some of the people who have been through your laboratory during the last several years.

Seymour, I wonder if you have any reactions of your own to the program we are getting under way. I would be very pleased to have any comments you might care to make on the most fruitful approaches to this challenging problem. In addition to the fancy ultraviolet experiment that is mentioned in the accompanying material, we are also setting up a much simpler battery of microcultures with a variety of nutrient media which could be scanned rather simply for changes in light scattering or in electrical conductivity.

I should have tried to contact you about this before and I can't think why I haven't except that we are so far away now and that it has been some time since we have run into one another. I would be very much interested to learn if you have any deep personal interest in exobiology and if so, we might explore the possibility of ways of enticing you to come out here yourself for an interval.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

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